

U.S. Military Academy - Officer's Quarters  
(Dean's Quarters)  
West of intersection of Parke, Jefferson,  
Ruger and Washington Roads  
U.S. Military Academy  
West Point  
Orange County  
New York

HABS No. NY-5708-3

HABS

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY - OFFICER'S QUARTERS  
(DEAN'S QUARTERS)

LOCATION:

West of intersection of Parke, Jefferson, Ruger and Washington Roads, U.S. Military Academy, West Point, Orange County, New York.

USGS West Point Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinate: 18.586930.4582810.

PRESENT OWNER  
AND OCCUPANT:

U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.

PRESENT USE:

Officer's quarters.

SIGNIFICANCE:

These quarters are a classic example of the Gothic Revival cottage as advocated and popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis. It is one of the earliest remaining sets of quarters at West Point.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1856 - 1857. A letter in the Superintendent's Letter Book mentions plans for the quarters in 1856 and drawings for the quarters are dated 1856; the earliest photograph is 1861. Williams's Facilities Report gives a date of 1857.
2. Architect: 2nd Lt. Q. A. Gillmore (drawings at the National Archives, Grashof.)
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Military Academy, Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Presumably, the Post Engineer and Quartermaster's office built the quarters.
5. Original plans and construction:

"Quarters 102 has changed relatively little since it was built in about 1856-57. The first design, approved by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in January 1856, was for a small cottage intended for use by one officer. In a letter found in the Superintendent's letterbook dated February 1856, it was decided to design a larger set of quarters leaving the option to divide it into two sets if necessary. A second, larger building, also designed by 2nd Lieutenant Q. A. Gillmore, was approved by the Secretary War on March 11, 1856, (PL 102-a). Williams, Facilities

Report places the date of construction in 1857. Though it was larger than the first design, it may not have been built as approved, for an 1861 photo (PL 101-a), already shows a substantial rear wing to the eastern set of quarters. At this time, though, the wing was quite detached from the main house and had different roofing material from the original main house, it did share details such as round gable end windows and window head details indicating at least the possibility that this kitchen wing may indeed be original. Major interior alterations and changes made to the east windows and to the single story brick link make it impossible to compare interior architectural details of this wing with those of the main house.

The west rear wing also appears to be of the same period as the main house with similar detailing of the doors and windows. A change in materials at the juncture of the wing with the main building may, however, be an indication of different, though close, dates of construction.

An 1883 map and the Williams description of 1889 present the building with the same basic spaces that exist today. According to Williams, there was one captain and one subaltern living in the two sets of quarters."  
(From Grashof. Building Analyses and Preservation Guidelines, HABS No. NY-5708.)

6. Alterations and additions: The earliest datable alteration was the extension of the brick wall between the main house and the east wing. This is dated through photographs from the Pittman Collection to be between 1867 and 1871. This wall was also extended in 1889 (Grashof). The quarters were converted to single family use early in the twentieth century with major alterations later occurring in 1937 and 1956.

Alterations from 1937 and 1956, recorded from drawings from the Office of the Quartermaster, include: First Floor: The removal of a bay window seat in the living room and its replacement by one from the "Morning Room"; a revised lower stair configuration in the entrance hall and the dining room filled and blocked by a curved partition wall; the removal of bookcases in the living room; the removal of a mantel and hearth and the blockage of a fireplace in the dining room; a new chair rail for the dining room; the remodelling of a bathroom and kitchen on the first floor; the conversion of a door into a window on the north side of the study and two other new windows in the same room; interior doors removed and installed; the alteration of windows in the kitchen; the replacement of windows; and the installation and alteration of light fixtures. Second Floor: The remodelling of bathrooms; the removal of doors; the removal of mantels and the filling of fireplaces. Basement: Doorways cut and filled; and a coal bin filled and its entrance sealed. Drawings should be consulted for other minor alterations.

B. Historical Context:

For the historical and architectural context of this set of quarters within the overall development of West Point, see U.A. Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 2: "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Quarters 102 is a largely unaltered Gothic Revival cottage that typifies those types of houses advocated by A. J. Downing in his books Victorian Cottage Residences (1842) and The Architecture of Country Houses (1850).
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Typical of a Downingsque cottage, the two-and-a-half story building has a symmetrical facade of three bays. The side and rear elevations are not symmetrical due to original or add-on wings. The building measures 56' x 58' on its north and east elevations respectively. There is a full basement and a partially finished attic floor.
2. Foundations: Foundations are stone and vary from 18" - 30" thick.
3. Walls: Walls are brick, approximately 15" thick and painted a beige color with a terra cotta color for the trim.
4. Structural systems, framing: Walls are load-bearing stone and brick with both stone and brick partition wall foundations and wooden beams supported by log posts. The latter, found under the "Morning Room" or east parlour, may have been more extensive in the central area at one time, being replaced by brick walls. The roof framing was not examined but it is presumed to be a common rafter room. Floors are carried on common wooden joists.
5. Porches: A frame porch, 9' deep, extends across the facade. This is a typical Downingsque cottage porch with bracketed posts and a sawn baluster balustrade. A small stoop exists on the west and south sides, serving secondary doorways.
6. Chimneys: There are four brick chimneys on the building: a two flue stack straddling the principal roof's north-south ridge to the south of center; a four flue stack just west of the main ridge and north of center; a two flue stack on the north-west wing; and a two flue stack on the southwest wing. All chimneys have corbelled caps and, true to Downing's designs, the two principal chimneys have chimney pots.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Of the five exterior doorways, the principal facade doorway is the most significant. This doorway opening has a tudor arch top with side lights forming tracery within the entire opening. The door has quarrel-shaped wooden muntins above two vertical panels. A transom bar, forming a tudor arch, separates two transom windows. Over the doorway is a label mold. A solid wooden door with applied moldings occupies a doorway cut in the living room between the central pavilion and the window. Other doorways include one in the west bay on the north elevation which is disguised as a window and two on the west, in the kitchen and pantry; the doorways on the west have new frames and doors.
- b. Windows: Original windows in the house are concentrated in the main block. Those on the first floor facade are double, mullioned windows with double-hung sash of wooden diamond-shaped quarrels. The windows on the north and south are in projecting bays with single quarrel sash windows. Second floor windows on the east are casements of diamond quarrels with arched tops of tracery. Other windows are of various sizes and types. Flat stone sills and flat or arched label molds are associated with most windows. A round bull's-eye window with a decorative muntin pattern is centered in each of the major gable end walls.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is a steep gable with perpendicular gables on the projecting central pavilions. The two wings on the west side also have gable roofs. All principal roofs and dormers are covered with slate. Photographs from the 1860s and 1870s (Pittman Collection, USMA Archives) show a standing seam tin roof although it is not known if this was the original roof material.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Decorative sawn brackets adorn the eaves of the east, north and south gables and the front dormers. A pendant hangs from the apex of each gable. Other parts of the roof and the porches have a hung-gutter system with downspouts.
- c. Dormers: There are nine dormers, all but two having their windows flush with the wall and rising past the roof eaves. The facade dormers are the most decoratively treated, having a bracketed cornice with pendants.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: Basement: Only the central pavilion area of the basement and the space under the living room are fully excavated; the area under the Morning Room is partially excavated. First Floor: A cruciform with appendages best describes the floor plan: an entry/stairhall and a dining room in the central section with balanced wings consisting of a "Morning Room" and a living room; to the northwest is a service

stairhall and a "Sun Room"; to the south and southwest is a study, pantry and kitchen. Second Floor: In the cruciform plan, bedrooms occupy three rooms on the north, south and west. A bathroom has been constructed in the stairhall, with other bedrooms in the service stairhall area and one over the first floor pantry area. A former maid's room and bathroom are situated over the kitchen and another bedroom is over the northwest sun room. Third Floor: On this floor the cruciform plan is in effect without appendages. The stairhall occupies the central area, bedrooms are on the south and east, a bathroom is to the west, and an open room is on the north.

2. Stairways: Two stairways provide access to the basement: a straight-run staircase in the service core and a bulkhead entrance on the west. The service stairway is a quarter-turn rise from the first to the second floor and a straight run with a quarter-turn jog to the third floor. The rebuilt principal staircase in the entry hall is a quarter-turn stair with a curved bottom from the first to the second floor and a quarter-turn to the third floor.
3. Flooring: Floors range from dirt and cement in the basement to hardwood throughout the rest of the house. Floors have probably been replaced (based on much older floorboards found in the east bedroom of the third floor).
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Original plaster walls have been covered in many rooms by vinyl wallpaper. Most rooms retain their original heavily molded baseboards. The sun room retains its original ceiling molding and cornice and the dining room still has its wooden chairrail and plaster wainscot. Heavy "compound" moldings are found in the entry hall and in the living room at the bay windows. Most ceilings are plaster. The pantry, study and kitchen have been completely remodelled.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Most original doors have been removed, replaced, enlarged or altered. The four panel closet door in the entry hall and the doorframes around this door and the entry door are indicative of original trim; this also has an original traceried fanlight transom. Doorways in the passage of the second floor retain their original three light transom windows.
  - b. Windows: The bay window of the living room has the most elaborate original window trim. Other windows in the southeast, northeast and northwest rooms of the house have original trim.
6. Decorative features and trim: The most decorative features are the marble mantels, the living room bay window trim and the entry hall door and closet door trim. The window seat in the living room is from the identical morning room bay window.
6. There is no original hardware.

8. Mechanical equipment:

- a. Heating: A new baseboard heating system was installed in 1956.
- b. Lighting: There are no original lighting systems.
- c. Plumbing: The plumbing system and fixtures are modern except for an early twentieth-century bathroom on the third floor.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The Dean's Quarters face northeast toward Washington Road and further, to the Hudson River. This set of quarters is a pivotal piece in the row of nineteenth-century quarters lining Jefferson and Washington Roads. Only two sets of quarters remain to the south on Jefferson Road (HABS NY-5708-1 and NY-5708-2) while Professors' Row (HABS NY-5708-4 - 6, NY-5708-41) exists to the west. The site is on the edge of the Plain, with a falling grade just beyond Washington Road to the north and east. West of the building is a service road that runs behind Professors' Row. Still further west is the Gymnasium (HABS NY-5708-43) and the steep rocky hill overlooking the Plain.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Original drawings are not known to exist. Alteration drawings are in the Facilities Engineer's Office, Directorate of Engineering and Housing, U.S. Military Academy.
- B. Early Views: Early photographs can be found in the U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. Some of these are reproduced in the Grashof and Lange volumes of this project.
- C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Records, U.S. Military Academy Archives and Special Collections. See bibliographic essay in the Lange volume of this project for a listing of record groups.

Williams, Captain Charles W. "Post Facilities Report," 1889. U.S. Military Archives.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Annual Reports, U.S. Military Academy Archives.

Grashof, Bethanie C. "Building Analysis and Preservation Guidelines for Category I and Selected Category II Buildings at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

Lange, Robie S. "West Point: An Overview of the History and Physical Development of the United States Military Academy," Historic American Buildings Survey, 1983. HABS No. NY-5708.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

National Archives, Washington, D. C.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation is part of a multi-year project sponsored by the National Park Service and the United States Military Academy, explained in the U.S. Military Academy, HABS No. NY-5708, Volume 1, "Methodology." This written documentation was prepared by Travis C. McDonald, Jr., architectural historian, in 1982-1985 based on fieldwork conducted in 1982.



ADDENDUM TO

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY, OFFICER'S QUARTERS

(UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY, DEAN'S QUARTERS)

(UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY, BUILDING NO. 102)

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